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Persian Gulf Sickness

During the Gulf War, Iraqi forces ignited numerous oil wells, leading to massive fires that produced dense clouds of smoke and soot. This exposure had significant health impacts on military personnel and civilians in the region.

Health Effects

- **Immediate Symptoms**: Exposure to the smoke and particulates from the oil well fires caused immediate symptoms such as skin

irritation, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, and eye, nose, and throat irritation.

- **Respiratory Issues**: The inhalation of smoke and particulates aggravated respiratory conditions like asthma and sinus problems.

- **Long-Term Health Concerns**: While most immediate symptoms were temporary, there has been ongoing research into the long-term health effects of exposure. Some studies have suggested potential links to chronic multisymptom illnesses, often referred to as Gulf War Illness.

Research and Findings

- **VA Studies**: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other research organizations have conducted studies to evaluate the health impacts of exposure to oil well fires. These studies have explored the potential for long-term health issues, including respiratory problems and cancer.

- **Veteran Reports**: Many Gulf War veterans have reported symptoms such as fatigue, skin rash, muscle and joint pain, headache, loss of memory, and

gastrointestinal problems, which are collectively known as Gulf War Illness.